

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-13 /082 W
-----181556 095814 /47

R 181450Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1845
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USLO RIYADH

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1167

USLO RIYADH FOR THE SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY
SUBJECT: SOVIET DELEGATION VISITS DAMASCUS

1. VIRTUALLY NO LOCAL PUBLICITY WAS GIVEN TO VISIT OF
SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS
SYTENKO DURING HIS VISIT TO DAMASCUS FEB 11-14. ONLY PRESS
MENTION OF VISIT WAS SMALL NON-SUBSTANTIVE ARTICLE APPEARING
ON EVE OF DELEGATION'S ARRIVAL FROM CAIRO. LOCAL WIRE
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SERVICE STRINGER TOLD US SOVIETS HAD REQUESTED PRESS NOT
COVER VISIT.

2. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR AND LOCAL STRINGER BOTH TOLD US
SYTENKO WAS NOT RECEIVED BY EITHER PRESIDENT ASAD OR
FONMIN KHADDAM. SAID DEPUTY FONMIN RAFI'I HIGHEST SARG
OFFICIAL TO RECEIVE HIM. STRINGER CLAIMED SYRIANS WERE

DISPLEASED WITH VISIT OF MIDDLE-LEVEL FONMIN OFFICIAL AT TIME WHEN NUMBER OF WESTERN FOREIGN MINISTERS WERE VISITING AREA. SOVIET EMBOFF, HOWEVER, TOLD EMBOFF FEB 17 THAT SYTENKO HAD MET WITH FONMIN KHADDAM AND DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS KAYLANI IN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND HAD EXCHANGED VIEWS WITH THEM ON POSSIBILITIES CONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. SYRIAN POSITION, SOVIET OFFICIAL SAID, WAS BASICALLY A REPLAY OF PRESIDENT ASAD'S TIME MAGAZINE INTERVIEW. SOVIET EMBOFF STRESSED THAT VISIT HAD NOT BEEN INTENDED AS A HIGH-LEVEL ONE. HE DESCRIBED SYTENKO AS A TECHNICIAN, A MEMBER OF A STANDING COMMITTEE IN SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY (PRESUMABLY ON MIDDLE EAST) WHO HAD COME WITH ASSOCIATES TO TAKE SOUNDINGS ON GENEVA.

3. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR PEKIC ALSO TOLD AMBASSADOR VISIT WAS BILLED AS "WORKING" VISIT WITHOUT POLITICAL OVERTONES. SOVIET SOURCES TOLD YUGOSLAVS THAT THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN ABACK BY DEGREE TO WHICH FAHMY HAD POLITICIZED SYTENKO'S CONTACTS IN CAIRO. ACCORDING PEKIC, SYRIANS AFFIRMED TO SYTENKO SAME CONDITIONS FOR SYRIAN ATTENDANCE AT GENEVA WITHOUT PLO THAT PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL ADVISOR DAUDI HAD GIVEN PEKIC SEVERAL WEEKS EARLIER--SYRIANS WOULD GO WITHOUT PLO ONLY IF: (A) PLO INVITED TO ATTEND IN ITS OWN NAME, AND (B) THEN REFUSED TO GO.

4. ACCORDING TO LOCAL JOURNALIST SYTENKO ALSO HELD MEETINGS WITH BAATH PARTY DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL AL'AHMAR AND LOCAL PLO REP KHALIDI. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY CONFIDENTIAL

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LOCAL TASS REP THAT DELEGATION HAD ALSO LAID GROUNDWORK FOR FUTURE VISIT BY HIGH LEVEL SOVIET DELEGATION PROBABLY TO BE LED BY KOSYGIN. WE ALSO HAVE HEARD THAT INVITATION WAS EXTENDED TO FONMIN KHADDAM TO VISIT MOSCOW.

5. COMMENT: ABSENCE OF PRESS PLAY AND GENERAL LOW-KEY TREATMENT ACCORDED VISIT SUGGEST THAT NEITHER SYRIANS NOR SOVIETS WERE INTERESTED IN PLAYING VISIT AS COUNTER-VAILING FORCE TO THIS MONTH'S VISITS SECRETARY VANCE AND OTHER WESTERN FOREIGN MINISTERS. REPORTED SYRIAN POSITION TOWARD PARTICIPATING IN GENEVA CONFERENCE WITHOUT THE PLO APPEARS LESS FLEXIBLE THAN THAT SUGGESTED BY ASAD'S AMBIGUOUS REMARKS ON SUBJECT IN JANUARY TIME INTERVIEW. MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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